

Application No.: 10/767,743**Docket No.: 713-1009****AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) A grommet adapted to be inserted into an opening of a sheet member having opposite upper and lower surfaces, said grommet comprising:

a shank extending in an axial direction of said grommet and having opposite upper and lower ends;

at least a locking tab coupled to said shank between the upper and lower ends of said shank and radially flexible relative to said shank; and

a head connected to the upper end of said shank and comprising a flange adapted to engage the upper surface of the sheet member when said shank and said locking tab are snapped into the opening;

wherein said shank comprises

a shoulder in a region adjacent the head, said shoulder being adapted to be placed below an edge of the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction after being snapped into the opening, thereby preventing withdrawal of said shank from said opening; and

an outer surface section inclined relative to the axial direction and connecting said shoulder and the lower surface of said head, for engaging the edge of the opening and drawing said shank into the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction; and

wherein, when said shank is seen along said axial direction, said shoulder is confined between an outer edge of said shank and a first boundary line intersecting said outer edge at two

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points, and said outer surface section is confined between said first boundary line and a second boundary line converging toward one of said points.

7. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 6, wherein the outer surface section is planar, and the shoulder is planar and perpendicular to the axial direction.

8. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 6, wherein said locking tab has a lower end directly connected to said shank and an upper end which is free of any direct attachment with said shank and is connected to said shank exclusively via the lower end of said locking tab.

9. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 6, wherein said shank, as seen along said axial direction, has a rectangular cross section, and the shoulder is located in a corner portion of said [[shank]] rectangular cross section, longitudinally extends toward an adjacent corner portion of said [[shank]] rectangular cross section, and has a width that decreases along said longitudinal extent.

10. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 8, wherein the region of said shank with said shoulder is less radially flexible than said locking tab.

11. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 6, wherein said outer surface section extends continuously, exclusively radially inwardly and upwardly from said shoulder all the way to the lower surface of said head.

12. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 6, wherein said outer surface section is closer to said head than an uppermost surface of said flexible locking tab.

13. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 6, wherein said first and second

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boundary lines converge at one of said points shoulder is approximately triangular in shape.

14. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 6, wherein said shank has an approximately rectangular cross section, taken perpendicular to said axial direction in the region adjacent to said head, and comprises said shoulder and said outer surface section are located within and in a corner portion of the approximately rectangular cross section.

15. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 14, wherein said locking tab projects radially outwardly from is positioned in a middle of a side of the approximately rectangular cross section.

16. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 14, wherein said shank comprises at least two said shoulders and two said outer surface sections being located in two diagonally opposite corner portions of said shank, thereby allowing said shank to be rotatable within the opening about an axis of said grommet.

17. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 16, wherein each of said shoulders and outer surface sections has an approximately triangular shape having a side [[that]] which is not parallel with any side of the approximately rectangular cross section of said shank and which is defined by at least one of said first and second boundary lines.

18. (canceled)

19. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 6, wherein said shank and said head together define an axial bore adapted to receive and retain therein an elongated fastening element.

20. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 6, comprising a plurality of said

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flexible locking tabs, wherein said shoulder is not part of any of said locking tabs.

21. (currently amended) A grommet adapted to be inserted into an opening of a sheet member having opposite upper and lower surfaces, said grommet comprising:

a shank extending in an axial direction of said grommet and having opposite upper and lower ends;

a head connected to the upper end of said shank and comprising a flange adapted to engage the upper surface of the sheet member when said shank is inserted into the opening;

wherein said shank comprises

a shoulder in a region adjacent the head, said shoulder being adapted to be placed below an edge of the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction after being inserted into the opening, thereby preventing withdrawal of said shank from said opening; and

an inclined outer surface section connecting said shoulder and the lower surface of said head, for engaging the edge of the opening and drawing said shank into the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction, wherein said inclined outer surface section extends continuously, exclusively radially inwardly and upwardly from said shoulder all the way to the lower surface of said head.

22. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 21, further comprising a plurality of flexible locking tabs coupled to said shank between the upper and lower ends of said shank for preventing withdrawal of said grommet from the opening after said shank and said locking tabs are snapped into the opening, wherein said outer surface section is closer to said head than an uppermost part of said flexible locking tabs.

23. (cancelled)

24. (currently amended) In the combination of claim [[23]] 25, said grommet further

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comprising at least a locking tab coupled to said shank between the upper and lower ends of said shank and radially flexible relative to said shank, said locking tab being located below the lower surface of said sheet member without engaging the lower surface.

25. (currently amended) In combination,

a sheet member having opposite upper and lower surfaces and an opening connecting the upper and lower surface; and

a grommet plugged in said opening, said grommet comprising:

a shank extending in an axial direction of said opening and having opposite upper and lower ends; and

a head connected to the upper end of said shank and comprising a flange engaging the upper surface of said sheet member;

wherein said shank comprises

a shoulder in a region adjacent the head, said shoulder being located below an edge of said opening by rotating said shank an angle about an axis of said opening after inserting said shank into said opening, thereby preventing withdrawal of said shank from said opening; and

an inclined outer surface section connecting said shoulder and the lower surface of said head, said inclined outer surface section engaging the edge of the opening and drawing said shank into said opening upon rotation of said shank, wherein said outer surface section extends continuously, radially inwardly and upwardly from said shoulder to the lower surface of said head; and

~~In the combination of claim 23,~~ wherein the region of said shank with said shoulder has a cross section allowing said region to pass through said opening without being deformed.

26. (new) The grommet of claim 24, wherein said outer surface section extends continuously, exclusively radially inwardly and upwardly from said shoulder all the way to the lower surface of said head.

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27. (new) The grommet of claim 26, wherein, when said shank is seen along said axial direction, said shoulder is confined between an outer edge of said shank and a first boundary line intersecting said outer edge at two points, and said outer surface section is confined between said first boundary line and a second boundary line intersecting said first boundary line and at one of said points.